5. The Balance Between Professional and Personal Life

The balance between a caregiver’s professional life and his or her personal life frequently is an uneasy one. Both are important for us.

We cannot help being affected by the people with whom we work, especially if they are highly traumatized and have difficult situations. Inevitably, we bring that into our personal life.

The same is true in the other direction. We all have difficult things happening in our personal lives at one point or another. We cannot help but bring those into our work.

One point is to be aware of this in both directions and to try to separate the two as much as possible. In particular, we must not bring our personal issues, including our emotional ones, into the work with our clients.

As we have emphasized throughout this section of this course, it is important for us as caregivers to get relief from personal and professional issues and to create space for ourselves.

Another point here is to prioritize and to be able to let go of professional issues and of personal issues at the appropriate times. This is a process of creating balance. For many people, it is not an easy process.

As we already have said, we need to reflect on this balance regularly.

It also is good to discuss this with our partners, friends, and colleagues and, of course, during supervision and intervision.

Not creating and maintaining balance in our lives leads to burnout.

Activity

What is the current balance between your professional life and your private life? What changes do you want to make?